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28. (Amended) A sample collection device as claimed in claim 23 wherein the cover sheet is coated with a permanent adhesive across its entire surface, and the portion of the cover sheet to which the backing sheet is not secured constitutes the hinged connection between the cover sheet and the base sheet.

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30. (Amended) A sample collection device as claimed in claim 23 wherein the cover sheet is a clear polypropylene film.

31. (Amended) A sample collection device as claimed in claim 23 wherein the backing sheet is a release paper.

REMARKS

The amendments to the claims as set forth above are intended to remove all multiple dependent claims from the subject application and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version claims 4, 6, 8, 9, 11-14, 16, 17, 19-22, 26, 28, 30, and 31, which illustrates all of the changes made to the specification and claims pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.121. The attached page is captioned "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made". Deleted language is bracketed and added language is underlined.

It is respectfully requested that examination begin in the United States on the subject Application as amended under Article 34 during the International phase and as further amended in this Preliminary Amendment.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments in connection with the filing of this correspondence to Deposit Account No. 50-0426.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS:

The paragraph heading has been inserted on page 18 of the subject application, before claim 1, as follows:

What is claimed is:

4. (Amended) A device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 1[, 2 or 3] wherein print is on the reverse of said base sheet.

6. (Amended) A device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 1 [or 2 to 5] wherein the base sheet is paper.

8. (Amended) A device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 1 [or 2 to 7] wherein the cover sheet is a clear polypropylene film.

9. (Amended) A device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s of] 1 [or 2 to 8] wherein the backing sheet is a release paper.

11. (Amended) A system as claimed in claim 10 wherein the device is a [device as defined in any one of claims 1 or 2 to 9] sample collection device for collecting and storing a biological sample for subsequent analysis, comprising tamper-evident storage means for storing said sample, said storage means comprising:

a base sheet arranged so that the biological sample may be positioned thereon;

a cover sheet hingedly secured to said base sheet, said cover sheet being adapted for substantially irreversible adhesive securement to said base sheet over at least a substantial portion of their facing surfaces; and

a backing sheet releasably secured to the surface of said cover sheet facing said base sheet;

wherein said storage means is suitable for digestion together with said biological sample.

12. (Amended) A system as claimed in claim 10 [or claim 11] wherein a hole punch takes a portion of said sample for analysis together with that part of the storage means in which it is encased.

13. (Amended) A system as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 10 [to 12] wherein said sample is digested in an alkali extraction.

14. (Amended) A system as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 10 [to 13] wherein said sample is subjected to amplification by PCR and then DNA sequencing.

16. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the device is a [device as defined in any one of claims 1 or 2 to 9] sample collection device for collecting and storing a biological sample for subsequent analysis, comprising tamper-evident storage means for storing said sample, said storage means comprising:

a base sheet arranged so that the biological sample may be positioned thereon;

a cover sheet hingedly secured to said base sheet, said cover sheet being adapted for substantially irreversible adhesive securement to said base sheet over at least a substantial portion of their facing surfaces; and

a backing sheet releasably secured to the surface of said cover sheet

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facing said base sheet;

wherein said storage means is suitable for digestion together with said biological sample.

17. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 15 [or claim 16] wherein said biological sample is stored for an extended period of time.

19. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein the device is a [device as defined in claims 1 or 2 to 9] sample collection device for collecting and storing a biological sample for subsequent analysis, comprising tamper-evident storage means for storing said sample, said storage means comprising:

a base sheet arranged so that the biological sample may be positioned thereon;

a cover sheet hingedly secured to said base sheet, said cover sheet being adapted for substantially irreversible adhesive securement to said base sheet over at least a substantial portion of their facing surfaces; and

a backing sheet releasably secured to the surface of said cover sheet facing said base sheet;

wherein said storage means is suitable for digestion together with said biological sample.

20. (Amended) A method as claimed in claim 18 [or claim 19] wherein a portion of said sample is punched out of the sample collection device with a hole punch.

21. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 18 [to 20] wherein said sample is digested in an alkali extraction.

22. (Amended) A method according to [any one of] claim[s] 18 [to 216] wherein said sample is subjected to amplification by PCR and then DNA sequencing.

26. (Amended) A sample collection device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 23 [to 27] wherein the base sheet is paper.

28. (Amended) A sample collection device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 23 [to 27] wherein the cover sheet is coated with a permanent adhesive across its entire surface, and the portion of the cover sheet to which the backing sheet is not secured constitutes the hinged connection between the cover sheet and the base sheet.

30. (Amended) A sample collection device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 23 [to 29] wherein the cover sheet is a clear polypropylene film.

31. (Amended) A sample collection device as claimed in [any one of] claim[s] 23 [to 30] wherein the backing sheet is a release paper.